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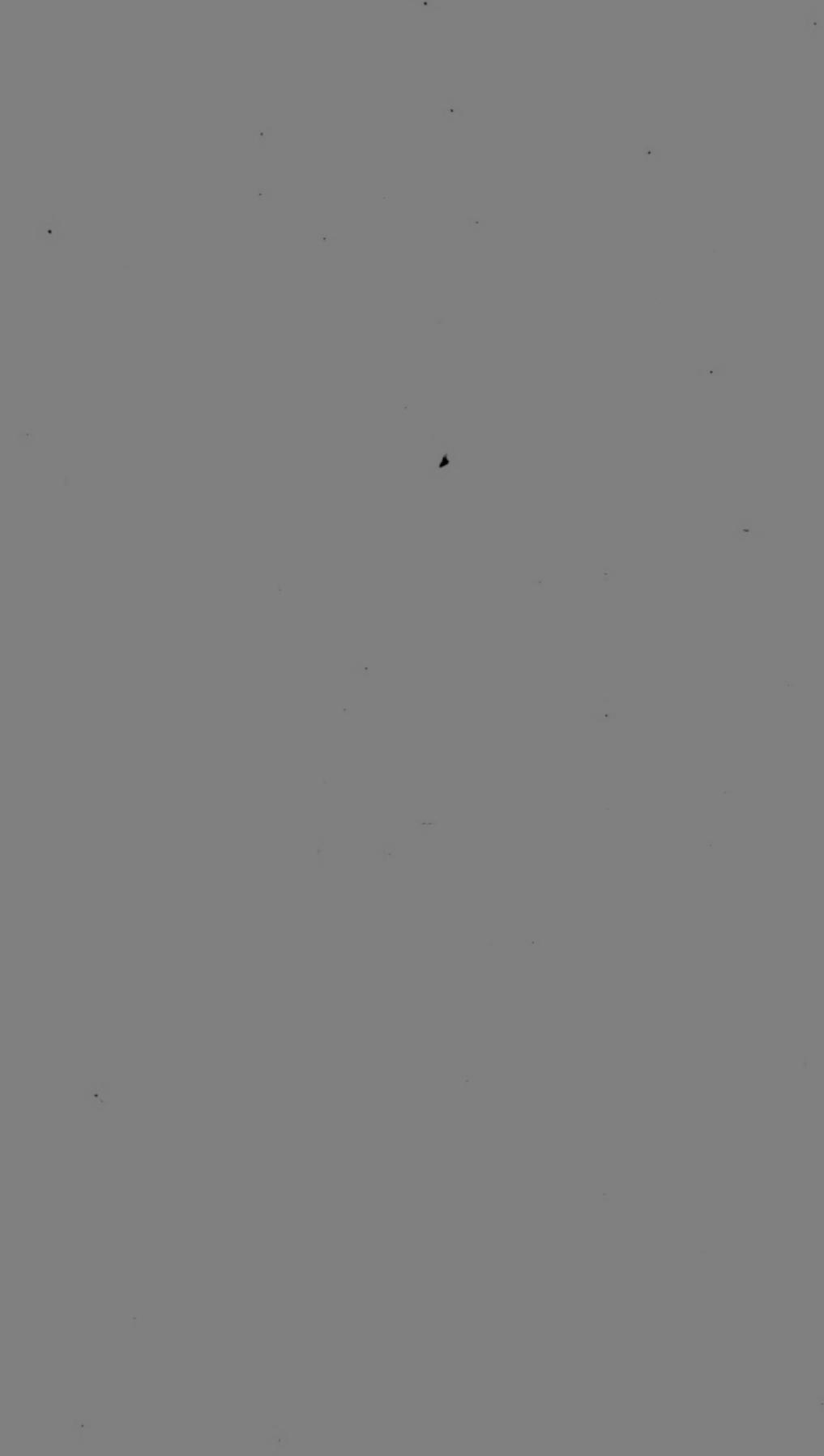
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SALVATION

OR

THE SINNER DIRECTED

IN THE WAY OF LIFE.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM J. McCORD.



PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

[1846].

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PREFACE.

THERE are many works already before the public, the design of which is to lead men to Christ. But a work of this kind may not be rendered useless because others of a similar character have preceded it. Every writer has a manner of his own; and the exercises of the awakened are almost endlessly diversified. The subject as presented by one author may meet some cases, but not others. May I not hope then, that notwithstanding the many who have preceded me in this path, this little volume may prove glad tidings to some inquiring soul? It may meet the case of some who have read other works of this kind without finding peace; and it may possibly fall into the hands of some who have never had the privilege of reading a treatise in answer to the great question, What must I do to be saved? It is for such, and especially for the young, and for those in our wide spread

country who enjoy not the regular ministrations of the sanctuary, that I have written. Hence I have endeavoured to keep near to the Scriptures, and have quoted largely from them. The Spirit, in his work on the soul, honours the word ; and so must they who would be helpful to those who are under the teachings of the Spirit.

Awakened persons, and persons seriously disposed, who may not be in the enjoyment of the regular means of grace, or may not have access to a pastor or pious friend ; or who, through diffidence, may fear to acquaint others with their anxiety, or ask advice ; may, it is hoped, be benefited by this brief treatise. Such were my circumstances ; and had such a work been put into my hands, or been within my reach, it would have been of incalculable service to me. I hope this may be useful to others in similar circumstances. That God may honour this humble attempt to serve him, is the earnest prayer of the author.

W. J. M.

AMENIA, N. Y., MAY, 1846.

S A L V A T I O N.

CHAPTER I.

SALVATION IMPLIES EXPOSURE.

ISAIAH lii. 7.—How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

WE love the bearer of good tidings. We welcome him for the sake of his message. And we prize the message in proportion to its value. So should we in the concerns of the soul and the things of God. We should greet the bearers of the gospel message. That message, though variously described, may be summed up in a single word—the sweetest word that ever met the ear of mortal man—salvation! “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that . . . publisheth salvation!” Isa. lii. 7.

“Salvation ! let the echo fly
The spacious earth around;
While all the armies of the sky
Conspire to raise the sound.”

Salvation ! Reader, let me spend a serious hour with you upon this theme. The subject is important. No other can equal it in importance. It is the most momentous theme to which the mind of man can be turned. It relates to the body and to the soul, to time and to eternity, to God and man, to heaven and hell. It is a question of weal or woe, of happiness or misery, and that through an endless duration. As it relates to you, it is whether you shall be saved or lost; whether you shall soar and sing with angels, or sink and suffer with ruined spirits. It is a question, too, which concerns yourself and involves your own individual interests for both worlds, the present and the future. No evasion of the subject can diminish its importance, nor separate from it your own personal concern. In comparison with it, what is this world with all its pleasures, its riches, its honours ? Nothing, and less than nothing ! Go, count the stars, and they are suns, the centres of innumerable worlds. Were all these worlds one solid mass of gold—one diamond gem—it would be nothing in comparison with salvation. And shall not this subject receive a moment’s attention ? Will ~~you~~ not pause and consider it ? O stop and

think! Read this little book as for your life; welcome it as the bearer of glad tidings; and let your prayer ascend to God for mercy. Cry for his Spirit to impress the truth upon your heart!

This subject is interesting. It should be interesting to you, because your own immortal destiny is involved in it; and that which so intimately concerns yourself should enlist your whole attention, and absorb all your powers in its study and contemplation. Besides, this subject, connected as it is with the character and glory of God, places the great Jehovah before us in the most endearing light, and gives a clearer view of his perfections than can anywhere else be found. We see in it "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6. It unfolds the plan of redemption, "the mystery of godliness," into which even the angels desire to look. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 12. It speaks too of the glories of heaven, and sets life, eternal life, before us as the prize which we are to seek, the crown for which we are to strive. If there be one subject which, more than any other, claims the attention of man; if there be one theme which challenges an interest above every other, it is salvation: the very subject which now invites your serious and prayerful thought; the very theme which this volume introduces to your notice, beseeching you to heed the message which it brings.

Salvation implies exposure. It implies sin and danger from which we need to be saved. Were there no exposure, there would be no need of salvation; and indeed there could be no salvation. Hence it is written, "The son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke xix. 10. Man is lost, and therefore needs to be saved; exposed, and therefore needs deliverance.

Man was created holy, in the image of God. "So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him." Gen. i. 27. This image, as we learn from the Apostle, where he speaks of the renovation of our nature, and the consequent reformation of our life, consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Thus it is written, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. iii. 10. And, "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 22—24. It is useless to speculate about what might have been our condition if Adam had not sinned. The sad fact is recorded that he did sin; he fell from "the estate wherein he was created," and by his fall lost the image of God in which he was made, and involved himself and his posterity in guilt and ruin.

We are sinners, by nature sinful ; for "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh." John iii. 6. "We are estranged from the womb ; we go astray as soon as we are born." Psalm lviii. 3. Our understandings are darkened, as it is written, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph. iv. 18. Our affections are corrupted ; our wills enslaved. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it ; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." Isa. i. 5, 6. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isa. lxiv. 6. We are by nature children of wrath and enemies of God, for "the carnal mind is enmity against him." Eph. ii. 3. Rom. viii. 7. We are averse to that which is good, and seek pleasure in that which is "earthly, sensual, devilish." Jas. iii. 15.

"Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these trifling toys :
Our souls can neither fly nor go,
To reach eternal joys."

The fall of Adam ruined the race. "He begat a son in his own likeness." Gen. v. 3. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' Job xiv. 4. To the natural

corruption of our hearts, we have added the actual transgressions of our lives. We were born in sin, and we have lived in sin. Psalm li. 5. "Communion with God is lost; we are under his wrath and curse, and so are liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." Deep and deadly are the stains of guilt. So far are we fallen from our original righteousness, that we take pleasure in our iniquities, "and roll sin as a sweet morsel under our tongues." Wickedness is sweet in our mouth. Job xx. 12, 13. "How abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water!" Job xv. 16. Hear the testimony of the great Apostle: "We have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. iii. 9—18. This is a dark picture; but in the first chapter of Romans we have one still

darker, which is thus concluded—and this is the climax in the description of man's native character—"Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Rom. i. 18—32.

Thus it appears that man now is far from righteousness. His Maker's image is lost; and Jehovah saith by the prophet, "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness." Isa. xlvi. 12. Men are far from righteousness as sinners. This charge includes the whole race. All are guilty before God. You are guilty. The law convicts you as a transgressor, and thunders out its curses against you. You are a criminal. Because of your sins, original and actual, in thought, word, and deed, in heart and life, you are far, O! how far, from innocence. As condemned by the law for their transgressions, men are far from righteousness. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. iii. 20. The law detects and discovers sin, as well as reveals its nature. Rom. vii. 7. And the law knows no mercy. It condemns for sin, for the first sin, for the least sin. "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." James ii. 10.—Gal. iii. 10. "I was alive without the law once," saith Paul, "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Rom. vii. 9. The law slays the vain hopes of the

self-righteous. It thunders terror in the ear of guilt; it condemns; it cries for blood. Hence it is written, "He that believeth not, is condemned already." John iii. 18. Sinners are far from righteousness because they are far from justification. Justification is the reverse of condemnation. And as they are condemned, they of course are not justified. They are as far from justification as they are deep in condemnation. Nor are they in the way to be justified. They are unwilling to be justified in God's way. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Rom. x. 3. They are vainly hoping to get to heaven in a way of their own. And when invited to the gospel-feast, they all with one consent begin to make excuse. Luke xiv. 17—20. How many are their excuses! How ingenious are they in devising pleas by which to justify their neglect of the great salvation, their indifference to the things of God, and the concerns of the soul, and of another world! Yes, reader, how many have been your excuses! How well you remember them! How clearly you recollect with what frivolous pleas you dismissed your serious impressions in former days, and grieved away from your soul the Spirit of the Lord! And even now, by what means do you justify yourself in the rejection of Christ! I

need not repeat these excuses, nor dwell upon them. You know them perfectly; and your conscience, as a faithful monitor, brings them full to your view, and convicts you of guilt in thus deferring the most important of all concerns. You see in these excuses, and in the disposition which makes them, that you are far from righteousness. Were you innocent, would you wish to be excused when invited to the Saviour? Were your heart right, would you be content to live—could you live—“without hope and without God in the world?” Eph. ii. 12. Would religious duties be, as they now are, your aversion? What is now the testimony of your life, but that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity? Acts viii. 23. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Gal. v. 19—21.

Hence men are exposed to the wrath of God. It is the testimony of Scripture that “God is angry with the wicked every day.” Ps. vii. 11. He declares, “ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn for ever.” Jer. xvii. 4. And again, “a fire is kindled in

mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell." Deut. xxxii. 22. God is not moved with anger as we are. He hath neither bodily parts, nor human passions. His anger is his aversion—the opposition of his nature—to that which is evil, and his determination to punish it. His is not the anger of man; it is the anger of God. It is indignation against sin. He is immutably opposed to sin; and from the very holiness of his nature, he must and will punish the transgressor. He abhors evil. He cannot look upon sin. It is the abominable thing that he hates. Jer. xliv. 4. He will visit it with merited punishment; for "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." Hab. i. 13. The sinner may expect to feel his vengeance. He is exposed to "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Rev. xix. 15. "What then shall he do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall he answer him?" Job xxxi. 14. A day is coming when "upon the wicked God shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Ps. xi. 6. For it is written, "The hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." Isa. lxvi. 14, 15. "The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth

wrath for his enemies." Nah. i. 2. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; for our God is a consuming fire." Heb. x. 31, and xii. 29. "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire." Nah. i. 6. "The expectation of the wicked is wrath." Prov. xi. 23. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger and he shall destroy the sinners." Isa. xiii. 9.

The wicked are called children of wrath. Eph. ii. 3. They are said to "treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath," Rom. ii. 5; and the Saviour declares that unbelievers have "the wrath of God abiding on them." John iii. 36. God's wrath is compared to a whirlwind, which destroys every thing before it. Thus it is written, "He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath." Ps. lviii. 9—11. Their destruction shall come as a whirlwind. Prov. i. 27. "And he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble." Isa. xl. 24. "Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly." Jer. xxiii. 19, 20; and xxx. 23. "Do we provoke

the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" 1 Cor. x. 22. And yet by our sins we have provoked him. He is angry with us. Think of an angry God! He can dash you to pieces in a moment. "He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke." Ps. civ. 32. "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing; he sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; yea, all nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." Isa. xl. 15—23. Nor can you hide from his presence. His eye is ever upon you. Flee to the ends of the earth, and still he is near. Make your bed in hell, and he is there. Ps. cxxxix. 7—12. You are ever beneath the eye and exposed to the wrath of an angry God!

Men are also exposed to the reproaches of conscience. It has been made a question whether heaven is a place; and some who deny that it is, and would have heaven everywhere, are equally anxious to have hell nowhere. Some imagine they should be happy, could they but persuade themselves that there is no hell—a system of belief, according to which we should fear the sexton more than the murderer; for if hell means nothing more than the grave, then we are taught to fear, not the man who kills us, but the man by whom we are buried! Matt. x. 28. But conscience would remain, even if there were no hell. This is

inseparable from the sinner's self. It will go with him where he goes, and remain with him where he remains. While he continues unrenewed and unforgiven, as he must for ever if he die unpardonable, it will follow him with reproaches and make him miserable. In this world it may be quieted ; it may be lulled to sleep ; it may be seared : but it is not dead, it only sleepeth ; the time will come when it will awake, and then it will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder. Prov. xxiii. 32. The reproaches of others we may endure, but who can bear the reproaches of himself, and that for ever ? To be self-condemned is to be miserable.

Reader, conscience is a part of yourself. You cannot divest yourself of it. It reproves you for your sins ; and though it may be hushed and seared, there are times when it will speak, and when its voice must be heard. And however you may silence or evade its reproofs in this world, they cannot be silenced nor evaded in the world to come. A guilty conscience must be the torment of the wicked wherever they are ; and it will make a hell of any place. Conscience is "a bosom friend, or a bosom fury." It is "a living scorpion to the deathless soul" of the wicked —the undying worm that will ever gnaw upon their hearts—upon your heart ! Mark ix. 44—48.

As sinners are now under the wrath of God, condemned by his law, and in a state of en-

mity with him; so are they now subject to the checks, reproofs, and reproaches of conscience. But as the wrath of God is yet wrath to come—punishment yet to be inflicted—reserved for another state of being; so the reproaches of conscience, the remorse it will occasion, the despair it will inflict, are yet to come. It is evil which impends, and from which there is no escape, but by timely repentance. Conscience may sleep here, but it will be awake in the future world. It will bring up to view the scenes through which the sinner has passed in this probationary state. It will recall the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the means of grace possessed and abused; the Bible with its precious invitations neglected; the grieving of the Spirit; the rejection of the Saviour; and one terrific sound will ever ring in the ear of the lost—O sinner, thou hast destroyed thyself! Hos. xiii. 9. Even now thy conscience condemns thee, reader; “and if thy heart condemn thee, God is greater than thy heart, and knoweth all things.” 1 John iii. 20. The man who had not on a wedding-garment, was speechless because condemned by his own conscience; and so wilt thou be when arraigned before the bar of God. Matt. xxii. 11—13. “Then shall the wicked say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is

come, and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi. 16, 17.

Hence you are exposed to the miseries of hell. Death will not terminate your existence.

" 'T is not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die."

You must live for ever. There is a hell; and to it you, as a sinner, are exposed. Its miseries are dreadful; their duration eternal. There the wrath of God is poured out without mixture upon the wicked. There conscience stings the soul with remorse. There the devil and his angels torment the lost. There are wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matt. xiii. 42. O what untold horrors reign in the prison of despair! Every sense of the body, and every power of the soul, is an avenue of pain; and there is no end, and no relief, to the miseries of that gloomy world. The soul once lost, is lost for ever. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Matt. xxv. 46. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Rev. xiv. 11. This is the second death: the wages of sin. Rev. xx. 14. Rom. vi. 23. It is the curse, the penalty of God's law, which is incurred by every transgressor; as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. iii. 10. Who hath fulfilled the law in all things? Not one. Who

then is not liable to the curse? And if death overtakes you in your sins, what becomes of your hopes, and where is your soul? Lost—lost for ever—doomed to the miseries of hell! Who can dwell with the devouring fire? who can dwell with everlasting burnings? Isa. xxxiii. 14. Think of the rich man begging for a single drop of water, and receiving for answer that he had received all his good things, and must now be tormented for ever! Luke xvi. 24, 25. Think that his case may be your own, if you slight this message of salvation; and O awake to your danger, and flee from the wrath to come! Matt. iii. 7.

Such, then, is the exposure which salvation implies, and from which it proposes to rescue us. Such, reader, is your condition, such your state. You are fallen, sinful, far from righteousness, exposed to the wrath of God, to the reproaches of conscience, to the curse of the law, and to the miseries of hell. What a fearful state is this to be in! Dying thus, you are undone. You are then a prisoner of despair; and hope can never beam on you.

From this discussion we may infer the need of salvation. We stand in perishing need of it; in so much need, that, without it, we must perish; without it we must die in our sins, and can never be admitted to the Saviour's presence in peace. John viii. 21.

We need salvation to deliver us from danger. Tidings of the way of deliverance must

be good tidings—"good tidings of good." Would we but open our eyes to our exposure, we must feel our need of deliverance. Look around you, reader; see the dangers which environ you; see the wrath of God impending; the flames of hell gathering at your feet; the pit enlarging for your reception; guilt accumulating; the heart hardening; life wearing away; the day of death hastening; yourself standing on the brink of the grave and the borders of the pit; judgment lingering not, damnation slumbering not, 2 Pet. ii. 3; and tell me if you do not need salvation—need it to deliver you from peril—to bring you up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set your feet upon a rock, and establish your goings, and put a new song in your mouth, even praise unto our God? Ps. xl. 2, 3. Yes, you need salvation to rescue you from danger.

And you need it to renovate your nature. Your heart is depraved, and you must have a new heart and a right spirit, or go down to endless woe. The Saviour has said, "Ye must be born again." John iii. 7. The corruption of your nature renders a change of heart necessary. You must experience the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Titus iii. 5. Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14. You are impure. You need to be purified,

sanctified, and cleansed. The old man must be put off, and the new man put on. The Lord has promised to give a new heart, and to put his Spirit within us, Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27; and to this end you need salvation, that you may be born of the Spirit, and become a new creature in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. v. 17.

You need salvation to justify you before God, and make you righteous in his sight. You are now far from righteousness, stained with guilt, in a state of condemnation. The law has demands which you have never met, and never can meet. It cries out for vengeance on you. You are a condemned criminal. Not only do you need a renovation of heart, but a justifying righteousness. The salvation offered you brings near an all-sufficient righteousness; and you need it, that you may be acquitted, be accounted righteous, and be presented without spot before the throne of God. O sinner! were deliverance proclaimed to captives bound in prison, with what joy would they welcome the good tidings! And will not you welcome the message which speaks of deliverance from wrath, and which offers to you the liberty of the sons of God? “If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” John viii. 36.

You need salvation to prepare you for heaven. You are now unprepared. You feel unprepared. With all your guilt upon you, you are not fit for the presence and the praise

of God with the pure spirits above. You are not ready for the summons of death ; not ready for the trials of the judgment ; not ready for the joys of heaven. Those joys are holy joys, but you are not holy. Those joys flow from God's presence, but you are not prepared to welcome and delight in his presence. Your heart must first be made new ; your sins must first be washed away ; you must first be clothed with the Redeemer's righteousness, and partake of the sanctification of his Spirit. The same mind must be in you which was in Christ Jesus ; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Phil. ii. 5. Rom. viii. 9. And how can you ever be prepared for the mansions of rest, if you reject salvation, refuse to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and resist and grieve his Spirit ?

You need salvation, not only to take away your sins and fit you for heaven, but to take you there, and make you blessed for ever. Salvation begins here in the renovation of our nature and the pardon of sin ; it is completed in heaven, where we are made perfectly happy and blessed for evermore. If we are not saved from sin here, we shall not be saved in heaven hereafter. Yet heaven is what you desire, heaven is what you hope for ; but heaven you can never reach if you reject this salvation. To reach heaven you need salvation. There is no heaven without it. Then embrace it. Welcome the message and obey.

it ; and let it be the language of your heart, “ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! ”

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO SAVE US.

MATT. i. 21.—And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins.

WE have seen that salvation implies exposure, and that we therefore need salvation. Salvation is deliverance from sin and its consequences ; from the guilt, pollution, and power of sin here, and the punishment of sin hereafter. To be saved is to be rescued from sin and hell, and taken to heaven ; to be restored to the favour of God in this world and the enjoyment of God in the next. It begins in regeneration and justification ; is carried on in our sanctification, and is completed in our glorification. As it is written, “ Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be

conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Rom. viii. 29, 30. Hence, when Joseph is instructed respecting the birth of the Saviour, he is also instructed respecting his name, “ Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” Matt. i. 21.

Jesus came to save. This was the design of his advent. “ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” John iii. 17. “ The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Matt. xx. 28. “ He came not to destroy, but to save.” Luke ix. 56. “ Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me ; in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. . . . By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Heb. x. 5—10. He assumed our nature for the very purpose of accomplishing our deliverance and salvation by his own death. “ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself like-

wise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Heb. ii. 14, 15. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Tim. i. 15.

Jesus saves from sin and from the curse of the law. It would be an interesting study to collect together the names and titles of the blessed Redeemer, and ascertain their true and real import. Many of them have a relation to us, to our circumstances and wants. We are sinners; and he is called Jesus—Saviour—because he saves from sin. You must be saved from your sins, or they will be your ruin. And sin exposes to wrath; and from wrath you must be saved, if saved at all. From this too Jesus saves. Saith an Apostle, “For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who

walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 3, 4.

Jesus takes his people to heaven. This completes their salvation. He has said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 2, 3. To be with Christ, and where he is, is the perfection of bliss. Hence it is written, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. He will say unto them on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And the righteous shall go away into life eternal." Matt. xxv. 34, 46. "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thess. iv. 14. "God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. xxi. 3, 4. The happiness of the righteous is beautifully described in Rev. vii. 9—17; They stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. They

cry with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And the angels join in their song, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And what are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ? . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

“With what sublime simplicity and brevity Paul sums up the bliss of heaven: ‘So shall we be for ever with the Lord.’ It would be much to ‘be for ever with’ any one of the angels, in any part of heaven, however remote from the throne of God and the Lamb. It would be much to ‘be for ever with’ any one of the saints, even if not within the sight or the sound of the ‘general assembly’ before the throne. It would be much to ‘be for ever’ *alone* on the most distant hill of im-

mortality. It would be much to 'be for ever', *any where*, out of hell. What then, must it be, to 'be for ever with the Lord?'"—Yet to this does Jesus exalt his people. His intercessory prayer is answered in their glorification, where sin and sorrow are alike unknown:—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 24.

But how does Jesus save his people from their sins? What has been done for our salvation? Here two things are to be remembered:

1. *God is holy and hates sin.* He is holiness itself; and he says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Pet. i. 16. "He is the holy Lord God Almighty." Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. Sin is his abhorrence; it is an abomination to him. Jer. xliv. 4. He hates it, not only as it is a transgression of his law and an abuse of his goodness, but as it is in itself opposed to the holiness of his nature and the rectitude of his character. And,

2. *God is just and will punish sin.* His character is perfect. All his attributes are infinite; and they are equally dear to him. He will never sacrifice one of them to another, nor exalt one of them above another. He will never sacrifice his justice, nor his truth, to his benevolence. There is a beautiful harmony among his attributes. There

is no conflict among them. They all conspire to render his character infinitely perfect and lovely. His truth is as dear to him as his goodness; his justice is as dear as his mercy. As he must, from the holiness of his nature, hate sin; so must he, from the justice of his nature, punish it. "A God of truth and without iniquity; just and right is he." Deut. xxxii. 4. And he saith, "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." Deut. xxxii. 35.

The Bible teaches that God is love: and it also teaches that he is holy, just, and true. Justice and truth are essential perfections of his character, as well as benevolence; and holiness is the combined moral excellence of all his perfections. He is holy; and holiness is necessarily opposed to sin. The happiness of the creatures is not the end of creation, but the glory of the Creator; and when the creatures do not seek that glory, and make it the end of their being "to glorify God and enjoy him for ever," his holiness and justice both require their punishment. This punishment is the wrath to come, to which sinners are now exposed, and which falls upon them after they pass from this vale of tears. It is punishment resulting from the essential and necessary opposition of God's nature, and character, and purposes, to every thing impure—punish-

ment inflicted because God is holy, just, and true.

Now the question arises—if God is holy and hates sin; if he is just and will punish it; if he is true and faithful, and will fulfil his threatenings and execute wrath upon his enemies; then how can we be forgiven and saved? In reply it may be observed—

That we are sinners, exposed to the vindictive justice and fierce anger of God for our sins. Our exposure has been made plain; and we cannot deliver ourselves. We are without strength to accomplish our salvation. Rom. v. 6. Isa. xlv. 24. We need a strong deliverer; one who is able and mighty to save. 2 Sam. xxii. 2. Psalm lxxxix. 19. Isa. lxiii. 1. We cannot be saved by our works. The law demands perfect and constant obedience; no present or future obedience, could we render it, can atone for the past. The law says, Do and live; but as we have not done, it condemns us to death. And the law which condemns us for the first offence, can never justify us. “By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified.” Rom. iii. 20. We cannot be saved by our own sufferings, self-inflections, tortures, penances. No sufferings of ours can avail to atone for our transgressions. Vain are the heathen’s tortures, vain his ablutions; and equally vain are any self-inflections of ours to take away our sins. We may ask, “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the

high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Mic. vi. 6, 7. All these are vain; and equally vain is every thing we can do and suffer. Nor is repentance any satisfaction for sin. It makes no reparation to the injured character and government of God; it satisfies neither his holiness nor his justice; and if sin could be pardoned, simply on the repentance of the sinner, without an atonement—without a satisfaction to justice—encouragement would be given to transgression, the holiness of God would be tarnished, his truth and his justice would be sacrificed. Besides, if repentance could atone for sin, salvation would be of works, and not of grace. Sorrow and tears, however needful and proper, are no satisfaction. Nor are prayers and religious duties. No strictness in these can take away our guilt. To depend upon them is to ruin our souls. To make them our dependence is as fatal as to neglect them altogether. We may bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and give our bodies to be burned, and yet perish in our sins. 1 Cor. xiii. 3. You must have a righteousness better than your own, or you are undone. Remember with whom you have to do, the Lord God of hosts; and remember who and what you are, a worm of

the dust, a guilty rebel in danger of hell; and well may you inquire, How shall I escape?

As God is just, eternally and immutably just, sin must be punished, either in the person of the sinner, or of a substitute. The scheme of redemption was not intended to sacrifice the justice of God to his benevolence: it was designed to display all his perfections, meet the demands of justice, and render it possible for God to be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. iii. 23—26. We need a Saviour who can satisfy the claims of justice, take our place, suffer in our stead, and bear our sins as Jesus did, in his own body on the tree. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

As God is holy, immutably and necessarily opposed to sin, he can accept of sinners only on the ground of a perfect righteousness. The scheme of redemption was never designed to lower the standard of perfection, nor to save sinners on the basis of an imperfect obedience, however sincere, or of a defective righteousness, however painfully wrought. Perfect holiness is the standard of excellence at which all are to aim; and a perfect righteousness is that alone on the foundation of which sinful men can be accepted with God. But who of the sons of men hath such a righteousness? Not one. All are guilty. Sin infects us all; and yet a perfect righteousness must cover our polluted souls, or we shall be driven away in our wickedness. How then

can we escape the wrath of God, and his character not only appear untarnished, but acquire additional lustre in the view of all his creatures, while we are received and treated as righteous?

It must ever be remembered—and hence it is well to repeat—that God is holy, just, and true; and his holiness, truth, and justice, must be satisfied, or man cannot be saved. The sinner stands condemned and exposed; a substitute must be found for him, one who can suffer in his room, or he himself must suffer for his own sins. “Die he, or justice must,” if no substitute assume his place. The holiness, truth, and justice of God all demand his punishment. He is condemned by the law; the law calls for his execution; where shall a righteousness be found sufficient to cover his naked and guilty soul? How can he be saved?

The Bible solves this difficult question. It pours divine light on human destiny; it opens a door of hope to the perishing. The Lord has found a ransom for our souls. He is gracious and saith, “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.” Job xxxiii. 24. Help is laid upon one that is mighty; and one chosen out of the people is exalted. Ps. lxxxix. 19. Jesus is our substitute, our representative and surety. He took our place. Our sins were laid upon him: “the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isa. liii. 6. He obeyed the law and

endured its penalty for us and in our stead. Gal. iii. 13. "He took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii. 7, 8. Thus he atoned for our sins; satisfied the claims of God; honoured his holiness, justice, and truth; opened the way of life by a true and proper satisfaction; and not only made forgiveness possible, but secured eternal life to his people. God can now be just while he justifies and saves. Does God's holiness require obedience? Jesus has obeyed;

"And in his life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters."

Does justice cry for vengeance? Jesus has suffered. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Rom. viii. 34. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 4, 5. By his obedience, sufferings, and death, he has made an atonement, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Dan. ix. 24. "He is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 2. "God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no

sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. "He is the Lord our righteousness." Jer. xxiii. 6. His obedience and sufferings—his doing and dying—constitute his righteousness, the everlasting righteousness which he has wrought out and brought in for our salvation, and which is brought near in the gospel. Isa. xlvi. 12, 13. It is called in the Scriptures the righteousness of God. Paul declares, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed; . . . even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe." Rom. i. 16, 17, and iii. 22. And again, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 8, 9. Speaking of the Jews, he says, "They have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Rom. x. 2, 3. Christ's righteousness is called the righteousness of God, because it is that righteousness which God has provided for our justification. By it his holiness and justice are satisfied and in consequence of it a free offer of salvation is made to men. Through it we may find acceptance with God. In the work of Christ, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each

other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." Ps. lxxxv. 10, 11. Being far from righteousness, we need Christ's righteousness; and when, through the operation of the Spirit upon our hearts, we believe in him, his righteousness is imputed to us, and we are accounted and treated as righteous; our hearts being renewed, we are by faith forgiven and accepted. It is by faith in Christ's righteousness then, that we are pardoned and justified. His righteousness is the only ground of pardon and of hope. It is on the basis of this alone that the sinner can be saved. "The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi. 23. As our surety and substitute he has suffered in our stead; God's character and government are vindicated; all his perfections are honoured; the door of salvation is opened; and we are to receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and rely upon his righteousness, and trust in him for pardon and eternal life. This is the beginning of salvation; and it is perfected in heaven, whence all sin is banished, and where all happiness is enjoyed—"to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 6, 7.

Thus we see what Jesus has done to save

us. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." 1 Pet. iii. 18. He assumed our nature, and suffered that we might be delivered from suffering. He died that we might live. To save his people from their sins, he gave himself up to ignominy and to death. What love! what compassion! While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; he died for the ungodly. Rom. v. 6—8. This is the pity of a God! Jesus loved us, and gave himself for us. Eph. v. 2, 25. Had not he interposed, God's holiness and truth would have required our punishment; his justice would have demanded our eternal condemnation. But now Jesus is our refuge, our hiding-place. We are safe beneath his cross.

"God's vengeance will not strike us here,
Nor Satan dare our souls invade."

Jesus is the Saviour. By faith in him we are delivered from condemnation and wrath; and he of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. 1 Cor. i. 30. See in him God reconciled, heaven and eternal life held up to your view, and cast your soul upon him, saying,

"Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'T is all that I can do."

It is all that he requires. Receive him into

your heart, and you are safe, and heaven with its glories shall be yours; yours eternal life, eternal joy!

From what precedes, we infer the desirableness of salvation. We have seen our need of it, in what it consists, and what has been done to save us. Jesus came into the world upon this errand of mercy, and died on the cross to accomplish it. It is a salvation from sin, from its guilt and pollution, its power and punishment, and it is desirable.

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John i. 7. It cleanses from the guilt of sin. Guilt is liability to punishment. To this, sin renders us obnoxious. But the salvation which Jesus accomplishes delivers from guilt. When we embrace Christ by faith, we are no longer condemned. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom. v. 1. “There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Rom. viii. 1. And have you no desire to be delivered from condemnation? No desire to be rescued from your exposure? Think of your danger; look around at your peril; see the prison of despair ready to receive you; and is not salvation to be desired when it rescues from such perils? O could you see your danger as it is—could your eyes be opened to look upon your situation in its true light—could you have a clear view of your

guilt, I am sure you would think salvation desirable.

It delivers from the pollution of sin. Sin viatates, corrupts, pollutes. The blood of Christ cleanses from this pollution. It procures the gift of the Holy Spirit, by whose influences our hearts are renewed, and the work of sanctification is begun and carried on in our souls. “Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

1 Cor. vi. 9—11. Again, it is written, “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. Think how odious sin makes us in the sight of God; how it corrupts and pollutes all the parts of the body and the faculties of the soul; how it debases the mind and renders it earthly, sensual, and grovelling; and is it not desirable to be freed from all this pollution of sin? Why, then, will you not come and wash in the fountain which is open for sin and uncleanness? Zech. xiii. 1. Are the stains of sin deep upon your soul? The blood of Jesus can wash them all out. Look to him for purification. Isa. i. 18. Titus ii. 14.

Salvation delivers from the power of sin. Sin has a condemning, a corrupting, and an enslaving power. They who commit sin are the servants of sin. John viii. 34. Rom. vi. 16.

“ How sad our state by nature is !
Our sin, how deep its stains !
And Satan binds our captive minds
Fast in his slavish chains.”

We may boast of our freedom, but while in our sins, we are the veriest slaves !

“ He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free.”

They who are delivered from their sins, are the Lord’s freemen. John viii. 36. 1 Cor. vii. 22. Rom. vi. 17. They stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. Gal. v. 1. And have you no desire for the liberty of the sons of God ? No desire to have the fetters of sin broken off, and your captive soul set free ? to be made an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ ? Rom. viii. 14—17. Jesus is the great Liberator. He came “ to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” Isa. lxi. 1—3. Would you be delivered from the power of sin ? Look to Jesus, who takes the prey from the mighty, and delivers the lawful captive. Isa. xlix. 24. He will set you free ; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 2 Cor. iii. 12. Reject him, and you are bound for ever ;

your fetters will become stronger and stronger, till at length you sink down in the chains of eternal despair. Did you never utter one devout acknowledgment to God for civil and religious liberty? That were treason to your country. And will you make no effort for spiritual freedom? No effort to escape from the dominion of sin? Then you are lost! Lost! Who can tell the fearful import of that dreadful word! Lost! it is the ruin of the soul; of every thing precious and dear; the wreck of hopes, of happiness, of all we are and all we prize. Go, view the ruined spirits in the world of woe; measure the length and breadth of their misery; see in their anguish—and which must be yours, if you are lost—the desirableness of salvation, which delivers from the guilt, pollution, and power of sin; and while you see its desirableness, seek it with all your heart—seek it in Jesus, who came to save from sin and hell, restore to God's favour, and exalt to heaven. For,

Salvation delivers from hell. If saved from our sins, we are also saved from the punishment which they deserve. Jesus endured the penalty of the law, that we might be delivered from it. If interested in him, we are rescued from perdition. And surely this is desirable. O what would you give to be sure of escape from hell? And salvation prepares us for usefulness and happiness here, as well as for rest hereafter. It fits us for the service of God in this world, as well

as for his praise in the next. It teaches us to live to God's glory ; it enables us to die in peace ; so that living and dying, we are the Lord's, and shall be with him for ever ! Rom xiv. 8. 1 Thess. iv. 17.

See, then, the goodness of God in giving his Son for us. It was of his own free love that he did it. He might have left us with no provision for our deliverance from sin and death. But he did not. " He so loved the world as to give his Son." John iii. 16. And he gave him freely. And now the offer of life through him is freely made. We should accept it. This is our duty and our privilege. We are authorized to accept it ; we are required to accept it ; we are bound to accept it ; and we refuse at the hazard of our souls. To reject Jesus is to reject salvation ; and to reject salvation is to reject Jesus. In either case we seal our own doom and destroy ourselves ; and the inscription on our eternal prison will be, — SELF-DESTROYERS ! Jesus came to save us from our sins ; we reject him, refuse to be saved, and he will say unto us, " Ye would not come to me, that ye might have life." John v. 40. O, sinner, pause, think, turn ; and let your trust be in the Saviour of sinners !

" The voice of free grace cries, Escape to the mountain,
For Adam's lost race Christ hath opened a fountain :
For sin and transgression, and every pollution,
His blood flows most freely in streams of salvation."

CHAPTER III.

IT IS A GREAT SALVATION.

HEB. ii. 3.—How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?

WE are exposed and need salvation. Jesus has died to save us. Yet most men are very indifferent to the subject. They seem to care but little about it, and to esteem it a thing of no value. Judging from their estimate of it, as exhibited in their lives, we should think it a matter of no great consequence. But it is of vast importance; “the one thing needful.” Luke x. 42.

“Religion is the chief concern
Of mortals here below.”

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the

Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
Heb. ii. 1—4.

It is a great salvation. The plan of redemption is a conception of infinite wisdom. It is too broad and deep to be the offspring of finite intellect. It abases man, while it honours and exalts Jehovah and brings glory to his name. It honours the law, while it spares the criminal. The just suffers for the unjust—suffers voluntarily, for he had power to lay down his life and to take it again. John x. 18. The ungodly are justified; and yet God's character is untarnished, and every one of his perfections receives new lustre and shines forth with ever-increasing glory. Rom. iv. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 6. The scheme of redemption is not a human invention, nor an angelic invention; it originated with God. The plan was laid by infinite wisdom; and when we contemplate it, we may well exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Rom. xi. 33. God is its author. It originated in his infinite love. It was because he loved us that he devised the way of salvation; because he loved us that he gave his Son for us. John iii. 16. And this love was self-moved. There was nothing in us to call it into existence; no good thing in us to move him to compassionate our case and provide salvation for us. It is well for us to remember that we had no claims; that they were forfeited by sin; and that we could have had no reason to complain, had no

provision been made for our deliverance from wrath. But God pitied us; and he devised the plan by which his justice could be honoured, and yet the sinner be forgiven and restored to his favour. And the plan is worthy of its Author. The salvation partakes of the greatness of him who originated it; and how great is he! “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” Job xi. 7—9. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.” Psalm cxlv. 3. “All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.” Isa. xl. 17, 22.

The Scriptures are full in their testimony that the plan of salvation originated with God. Immediately after the fall he promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. Gen. iii. 15. Even before the creation the delights of the Son of God, as our Redeemer, were with the sons of men. Prov. viii. 22—31. Speaking of the covenant of redemption, Jehovah says, “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have

sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. . . . My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. . . . His seed shall endure for ever."

Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, 30—37. Addressing the Son he declares, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Isa. xlvi. 5—8, and xlix. 7—9. And again, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Isa. xlix. 6. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." Isa. liii. 10—12. "God sent his Son into the world." John iii. 17. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." Rom. iii. 25. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv. 4, 5. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and

sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John iv. 9, 10. How often is salvation ascribed to God! and with what frequency is he spoken of as the God of salvation! Isa. xii. 2; Ps. lxxix. 9. "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Ps. lxviii. 19, 20. "Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah ii. 9. "He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us." Luke i. 69. And what more exalted conception can we form of the greatness of this salvation, than to think of it as worthy of its great Author! O what condescension, that God should stoop so low as to look upon us! What are we that God should pity us! that he should so love us as to provide salvation for us! and so great salvation! He needs us not. He is happy without us. Yet his bowels of compassion have been moved for us! If our hearts were not adamant, they would melt at the thought of such love. If they were not harder than the nether mill-stone, our repentings would be kindled together; and we would hasten to embrace the great salvation.

The plan of redemption is of itself enough to prove the divine origin of the Bible; for the book which reveals it, like the plan itself, must have had its origin in heaven. Both came from God, and like him are great. So Simeon felt when taking the infant Saviour in his arms, he said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy

word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke ii. 29, 30.

Consider by whom salvation was purchased. This is no other than Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the Son of man, and the Son of God; "for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. That Jesus possessed a nature like ours, in which he obeyed and suffered, there can be no question; and equally unquestionable is it, that he also possessed a divine nature. There were in him both divinity and humanity. "He wrapped the mantle of humanity about him; but the God was within." "He was, and continues to be, both God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person for ever." Thus saith the prophet, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isa. ix. 6. He is Immanuel—God with us. Isa. vii. 14. Though he came in the flesh, he is over all. God blessed for ever—"the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 3. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created,

that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.” Col. i. 14—20. We have, then, a divine Redeemer. There is not only human sympathy in his heart, but divine compassion; and in his arm is omnipotent strength. They who repose in him are safe. And surely it must be a great salvation which required a divine Redeemer to accomplish. This was needful. He must be God to redeem as well as man to die. None but he could bear infinite wrath. None but he could obey and suffer in the stead of others. No mere creature could make atonement, for God has claims upon every creature for all the obedience it can render, and no sufferings of a mere finite creature, for any limited duration, can be a full satisfaction to the justice of God. The Mediator must be divine, that he might bring in a righteousness that could avail to our justification. And being divine, his atonement, though made with special reference to his own, is of infinite

value, for his divinity gives dignity and worth to his sufferings and death. Its merits can never be estimated. It is sufficient for the world, for every sinner and every degree of guilt. It is true that Jesus was a man of sorrows, "for the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" John i. 14; but it is also true that he is the infinite God, for the Word was God. John i. 1. He is both the root and the offspring of David, David's son, and David's Lord. Rev. xxii. 16. Matt. xxii. 42—45. And the work which he accomplished is worthy of himself—a great salvation. His atonement is not measured by the limited capacities of his human nature, but by the infinitude of the divine.

Then how great the price paid for our salvation! Among men, the price paid is not always a fair criterion of value. They may err in judgment, or be deceived. But here the price was fixed by infinite wisdom; and it has been paid. And what is the price? Not the obedience, nor the sufferings of a creature; nothing less than the blood of the Son of God. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. ix. 22. And the blood shed must be precious, that it might make atonement and satisfy for our sins. It is the blood of Jehovah's fellow, his equal; the blood of "God manifest in the flesh." Zech. xiii. 7. John x. 30. 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "Ye were not redeemed

with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." 1 Pet. i. 18—20. We read in Acts xx. 28, of the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. The divine nature did not suffer; but in virtue of the union subsisting between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, the acts and properties of the one are attributed to the other: for he took our nature into personal union with his divinity, and while his human nature alone suffered, his divine nature sustained his humanity in both his active and passive obedience, and rendered his work acceptable to God and available for us. Hence it is written, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 7. "Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Eph. v. 2. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. xv. 3. "Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God." Heb. ix. 13, 14. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die,

but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Heb. ix. 25—28. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart." Heb. x. 19—22. Here, then, is the price of our redemption—the blood—the life of Jesus. And must Jesus die to save us? Must God's own Son be delivered up to death? Is this the price he must pay to redeem us? And can men slight the mercy so dearly purchased? Can they lightly esteem it? Reader, can you thus treat the blood of the Son of God? Did he estimate your salvation so highly as to die to secure it, and will you cast it away as a thing of nought?

As he who purchased redemption is divine, so is the Spirit who applies it. All the persons in the adorable Trinity bear their appropriate part in the great work of human redemption. The covenant of works, made with Adam as our federal head, was broken, and we were ruined by his fall. Jesus is our representative and surety in the covenant of grace. He obeyed and died for us; and he purchased for us the Spirit to apply to us the benefits of the new covenant. And the work of the Spirit is no less needful than the work of Christ. Regeneration is as necessary as an atonement. And this work is so great,

the change is so entire, that it is called a new creation. Christians are the workmanship of God, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. ii. 10. The power exerted in this new creation is compared to the power by which Christ was raised from the dead: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Eph. i. 18—20. That it is the Spirit which applies to us the purchased redemption, read what the Scripture saith: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. . . . For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 1, 8. And Jehovah promises, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. The Saviour said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" and, "Ye

must be born again." John iii. 3—8. To his sorrowing disciples he said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." John xvi. 7—15.

It is the Spirit that renews our hearts; he works faith in us; he "unites us to Christ in our effectual calling;" he carries on the work of sanctification until the day of Christ. Phil. i. 6. Hence David prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Ps. li. 10, 11. And the Spirit is divine. The Holy Ghost is God. Thus it was said to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled

thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts v. 3, 4. He is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. He is possessed of all divine perfections; and that salvation in which he bears so conspicuous a part, must be a great salvation. That in which all the persons of the blessed Trinity are so deeply interested cannot be a trifle. What the Father planned, and the Son executed, and the Spirit applies, must be worthy of the God-head, and partake of the greatness of its divine origin.

It is a great salvation too, because of the change it effects in us. Our condition by nature was shown in the first chapter. We are sinful, exposed, and without hope. Salvation effects a change in all these respects. It changes our character. If interested by faith in the great salvation, our natures are changed, and we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. v. 17. From enemies of God we are converted into friends. Once we delighted in rebellion against him, now we delight in his service. We love his word; love the ordinances of his house; love his people; renounce ourselves; trust in his Son; and esteem it our greatest privilege to hold communion with him, to draw near to him in prayer, and to sing his praise. Once we were blind, now we see; once we were dead, now we are alive; we love what we once hated, and hate what we once loved. John ix.

25 ; Rom. vi. 4, and vii. 15—22. “ Old things are passed away, all things are become new.” 2 Cor. v. 17. Here is a great change—a complete revolution—in character. Sinners have become saints. Nor does salvation produce a less change in our relations. Sanctification changes our character ; justification changes our state. By nature we stand to the law in the relation of condemned criminals. If interested in the great salvation, we are no longer condemned. We are accounted righteous ; we are treated as innocent. It is not a bare reprieve, it is a perfect justification ; it entitles to the rewards of innocence, because our Surety has answered the demands against us. Here is a great change in our state. Before, we were condemned ; now we are justified, and have a title to eternal life ; yea, we are adopted into the family of God, and are heirs of heaven. John i. 12, 13. Rom. viii. 17. Hence, there is a great change in our prospects. What is the prospect of the sinner ? Death, eternal death ! What is the prospect of those who have a part in this salvation ? Life, eternal life ! The one is an heir of hell ; the other an heir of heaven. Look, then, at the change which this salvation effects in our character, our state, and our prospects, and in view of this change, measure, if you can, its greatness. O, it is a great salvation, and considered only in its relation to ourselves, it is above all estimate, above all price !

Consider the misery from which it saves us. "The way of transgressors is hard." Prov. xiii. 15. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Isa. lvii. 20, 21. Their consciences are ill at ease. Sin brings misery to the sinner, as it

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

By that change which this salvation effects, peace is restored to the soul. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." Gal. v. 22. "Great peace have they who love God's law." Psalm cxix. 165. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," says Jesus. Matt. xi. 28. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. iv. 8. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm lxxxiv. 11. The godly are saved from many evils in this world. They have a quiet conscience. They are freed from all the misery which results from a sense of unforgiven sin. And then they are rescued from all the miseries which the wicked must suffer in the world to come. There the lost writhe in eternal anguish, for ever dying, and yet forbid to die; for ever seeking death, yet death for ever fleeing from

them. Hell! hell! what horrors lie in that single word! Hell, a dwelling-place for eternity! O who does not, terror-stricken, shrink from the thought? What then must be the dread reality? From this, salvation delivers us. Think of it, and confess it a great salvation.

And consider the happiness to which it raises us. "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him." Isa. iii. 10. It is well in this world. His sins are blotted out, and shall never be brought against him to his condemnation. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. Rom. iv. 6—8. He has peace with God and peace within. His "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John i. 3. He may not be without seasons of trial and sorrow; he may know what sore temptations mean, and may even walk in darkness and see no light for a season; yet there are times when he can "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. i. 6—9. Were there no future state of existence, he would still be a gainer by his religion. His happiness in this world far outweighs the carnal joys of the wicked. And when death comes, he enters into the joy of his Lord, the full fruition of heavenly glory. That is happiness which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, which the heart of man hath never conceived. 1 Cor. ii. 9. O the glories of that upper world! There are the angelic hosts; there the army of the redeemed; there the blessed Redeemer

the Lamb of God, the Saviour of sinners ! What a company ! What songs are there ! What everlasting triumphs ! What a great salvation to be delivered from hell and raised to heaven ! O what a wonder that they who deserved the deepest perdition should be raised to the highest glory ! This indeed is a miracle of mercy. "Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust, and not be afraid : for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isa. xii. 2, 3.

This salvation is great, because it is eternal. Thus it is written : "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." Isa. xlv. 17. Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. v. 9. He "gives unto them eternal life." John x. 28. Hence he declares, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." John vi. 47.

And it must be a great salvation, because the angels take such an interest in it. The angels that sinned were left without salvation. No Saviour died for them. Heb. ii. 16. 2 Pet. ii. 4. That God should pity men and not angels ; that he should give his Son for man, and leave the fallen angels in their guilt and ruin, excites the wonder and admiration of those angels which kept their first estate. 1 Pet. i. 12. They have ever manifested the deepest interest in the scheme of redemption.

They were sent to tell of the coming Saviour. Matt. i. 20, 21. They announced his advent; witnessed his baptism; were present at his temptation; ministered to his wants; strengthened him in his agony; stood by him in his crucifixion; watched his grave; announced his resurrection; were present when he ascended; welcomed him to his glory: God manifest in the flesh was seen of angels. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Luke ii. 9—11. Matt. iii. 16, 17, and iv. 11. Luke xxii. 43. Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 5, 6. Acts i. 10, 11. Psalm xxiv. 7—10. They are now his messengers, ministering to the heirs of salvation, strengthening them in trouble, and delivering them from danger, as they did Peter from prison, and Paul from the perils of shipwreck. Heb. i. 14. Acts xii. 11, and xxvii. 23, 24. Yea, they are present in our worshipping assemblies—we must demean ourselves properly because of the angels; and they wait to rejoice over repenting sinners, and convey the joyful tidings to heaven. 1 Cor. xi. 10. Luke xv. 10. And is it not a great salvation when the angels manifest so deep an interest in it? He is great who planned it; he is great who bought it; great is the price paid for it; great is the Spirit who applies it; it effects a great change in those who are saved by it; delivers from great misery; exalts to great happiness; and interests greatly the bright spirits of heaven. It is a great salvation—eternal salvation.

Then, reader, this salvation is worthy of

your acceptance. It certainly is not beneath your notice. What interests all heaven, and all hell too, should certainly interest you—should interest all men. When heaven and hell are moved, the earth should not be indifferent. The salvation which is worthy the attention of angels—which indeed is worthy of God its great Author—is certainly worthy of your attention—it is worthy of all acceptance. It is so because of the expense at which it has been provided. The Son of God must come from heaven, assume our nature, die in our stead, to open the way of life. A rich feast has been made, and made at an infinite expense. What is freely offered you, and what you may have by accepting, cost the agony, the blood, the life of Jesus Christ! O think of this price; and is not salvation thus purchased worthy your regard? And can you slight it? Can you lightly esteem the price of your redemption? Will you count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? Heb. x. 28. Whatever else you do, I beseech you not to trifle with this salvation. When invited to the cross, do not begin to make light of it. Matt. xxii. 5. It is worthy your acceptance because of the prospects it opens before you. You are dying; it reveals the way of life. It sets before you the glories of the heavenly world, an unfading crown, never-failing riches, immortal songs, eternal rest and joy. It teaches you how to obtain the victory over death and the grave. And does it not here

meet a want of your nature? Are you prepared to grapple with the king of terrors? Were the summons for your departure to come now, could you welcome it? Are you prepared to go? Could you die in peace? Are you prepared for heaven? Not if this salvation is still neglected. Let the prospects it reveals command your immediate acceptance. There is no escape if you neglect it. There is no other salvation; there never will be any other salvation. There is no other probation; there never will be any other probation. Neglect this salvation, and you continue exposed till death comes, and then you are lost! No Saviour will be offered you in the future world; no salvation will there be proclaimed; no message of peace can there be heard or read; you are then beyond the reach of hope and mercy—lost, for ever lost! O flee to the cross! Delay not, for death is near!

“ Soon, borne on time’s most rapid wing,
Shall death command you to the grave;
Before his bar your spirit bring,
And none be found to hear or save.

In that lone land of deep despair,
No Sabbath’s heavenly light shall rise;
No God regard your bitter prayer,
No Saviour call you to the skies.”

CHAPTER IV.

SALVATION IS BROUGHT NEAR.

ISAIAH lvi. 1.—Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

ISAIAH li. 5.—My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth.

WHEN John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, he said, “Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. iii. 1, 2. And when the Lord Jesus began to preach, he too delivered the same sermon. Matt. iv. 17. The truths of the gospel will bear repetition. The salvation of which it speaks, is great, and worthy of our acceptance. But this would not avail, if we could never obtain it. It is not far off. It is brought near unto us. It is placed, as it were, within our reach; and we have but to stretch forth our hand and grasp the prize.

Salvation is brought near in the Scriptures. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” saith Paul, “for therein is the righteousness of God revealed,”—the righteousness provided for our salvation. Rom. i. 16, 17. The light of nature teaches that we are sinners. God is perfect; so must his works be; and

man came perfect from his hands. But he is now full of imperfection and of sin. How may sin be forgiven? On this point the book of nature is silent. It has not a line of a Saviour; it speaks not a word of Jesus. It is in the Bible, and in the Bible alone, that we read of forgiveness with God. "With him is plenteous redemption." Ps. cxxx. 4, 7. The Bible reveals the way of life. It makes plain the scheme of mercy. It tells us of our exposure. It reveals to us what has been done to save us. It speaks of Jesus—

"Jesus, the name that calms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease."

It brings good tidings of great joy; it proclaims a Saviour, Christ the Lord—Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Luke ii. 10, 11. 1 Cor. ii. 2. You have the Bible. It is in your dwelling and in your hands. You may read it daily. And whenever you read, salvation comes near. How often have you read! And when you have read the sacred page, or heard it read, God has brought nigh to you the salvation of his Son. Yea, even if you refuse to read, the fact that the Bible is in your house, is proof that salvation is near. "Search the Scriptures," saith Jesus, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." John v. 39. The Bible neglected is salvation neglected; the Bible unread is the ruin of the soul. O, how many Bibles will witness to

the everlasting condemnation of their owners in the great day! Reader, will not your Bible be among the number? However men may swear falsely on the Bible in courts of justice, the Bible itself will never be a false witness at the bar of God. It is the truth of its testimony which you will have reason to fear, because you have not given heed to the great salvation which it has brought near to you, and urged upon your acceptance.

Salvation is brought nigh in a preached gospel, and in the ordinances of the Christian church. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." Rom. x. 5—10. To preach the gospel is to preach the Lord Jesus as an atoning, an all-sufficient and the only Saviour. It is to preach our ruin by the fall, and our

redemption by Christ. It is to preach salvation, a free salvation, through the death of Jesus. This is the commission he gave,—“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark xvi. 15. He also said, “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke xxiv. 46, 47. The design of preaching—and of this volume—is to convince you of your sin, and misery, and danger, and lead you to Christ for pardon and eternal life. We try to be instrumental in your salvation. We pray the word may be to you “the savour of life unto life, and not of death unto death.” 2 Cor. ii. 16. Whenever you hear the gospel preached, you are reminded of your sinfulness and pointed to the Lamb of God. Ours is an errand of mercy. We bring you a message of life; and whatever may be the reception you give our message, we may say with all earnestness—“Be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. Luke x. 9—11. You may say, “As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.” Jer. xliv. 16. Yet still it brings salvation nigh; and if you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, (Acts x. 46,) we may pity you, but we cannot help it. When we have

delivered the message and committed it to God in prayer, our work is done; it is for you to receive or reject it. Yet it brings the blessing near; for Jehovah says, "My salvation is near to come;" yea, my salvation is gone forth in the gospel message.

Nor is it from the pulpit alone that the news of salvation reaches you. You hear it in the warnings and exhortations of Christian friends; you read it on the printed page, in the evangelic volume and the religious tract. These have come to you as leaves from the tree of life. They have spoken in terror and in love. They have alarmed and melted; drawn forth the sigh and the tear; spoken of hell, of heaven, of the cross, and brought salvation to your very heart. Again in this little book you read the words of life, and have the offer of salvation repeated; and if you perish, it will not be because you are ignorant of the way of life.

Salvation is also brought near in the ordinances of the Christian church. In baptism, regeneration is signified; and it also seals our ingrafting into Christ and our adoption into the family of God. In the Lord's Supper we see the emblems of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood. We are here reminded of our sinfulness, of the great sacrifice for sin, and of the necessity of faith in order to salvation. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore we keep the feast. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. With the emblems, bread and wine, before us,

we seem to hear the Saviour saying, " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." John vi. 53. And while they remind us of the price paid for our redemption, they also serve to bring salvation nigh. They have a voice which speaks to the heart, an eloquence which might move and melt an adamant.

Salvation is brought near in the offers and invitations of the gospel. Jesus not only offered himself on the cross for sin, but he also offers himself to sinners. He makes a free offer of himself to all who hear the gospel, and to all who read it. He offers to be their prophet, priest and king; their Redeemer and Saviour. He said to Zaccheus, " This day is salvation come to this house." Luke xix. 9. So in every offer he makes of himself to you, he says, " This day is salvation come to you." Yes, it comes in the person of the blessed Jesus, who saith, " Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. iii. 20. And how full, and free, and precious, are the invitations of the gospel! " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat

ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. lv. 1—3. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." John vii. 37. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.—And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. xxii. 17. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. xi. 28—30. These are some of Christ's gracious invitations. How sweet their charming sound! How often have you heard them! And as often has salvation been brought to your very door—to your inmost soul—and you have had the privilege of accepting or rejecting it. Yea, you have accepted or rejected it! And at this very moment, when the offer is again made, and the invitation again given, you must, and you do, either accept or reject it! "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2. "O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end." Deut. xxxii. 29.

Salvation is brought near by the strivings of the Spirit. The word of God does not

always go alone. Sometimes it is heard with indifference; at others with deep and tender interest. Why is this but because the Spirit, who is a sovereign, and moves when and where he pleases, does, at times, prepare the heart to receive the truth, and accompany the truth with power to the heart? Thus Paul declares to the Corinthians,—“ For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 2—5. It is the Spirit that gives efficacy to the truth, and makes it the power of God and the wisdom of God to the salvation of souls. 1 Cor. i. 18, 24. And have you never felt him operating upon your heart? Have you not had times of unusual seriousness? Ah, you have been convinced of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. John xvi. 8. The truth has often come home to you with unwonted power; you have thought of your soul, of the Saviour, and of the judgment: it was the Spirit bringing salvation near, and convincing you of your need of it! Even now you may feel his influences. O, resist him not. Grieve him not away. He comes to bring salvation to

you, to woo you to the cross, to renew your heart and save your soul.

Salvation is brought nigh when the gospel message meets our eyes or reaches our ears. It is written,—“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.” Psalm lxxxix. 15. And the Saviour said, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.” Matt. xiii. 16. The gospel is glad tidings of salvation. How often have you heard these tidings! Sabbath after Sabbath you have heard. You have heard from the ministers of Christ; by the admonition of friends; from the Bible and the tract; and now again you hear. This book speaks in the name of the Lord. Its message is to you. It brings salvation. O, how near is it brought! Choose this day whom you will serve. Resolve with Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua xxiv. 15.

Salvation is brought near when the word enters into our understandings. The gospel is so plain, the way of life is so clearly revealed, “that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” Isa. xxxv. 8. “He may run that readeth it.” Hab. ii. 2. Yet we may hear the gospel, or read it, and not understand it. And if when we hear, or read, salvation is brought near, it is brought still nearer when we understand the word. And has not the word entered into your understanding? Are you not acquainted with your danger as a sinner? Do you not know

what has been done to save you? And do you not know what you must do to be saved? O how many have a perfect understanding of the gospel, and yet neglect the great salvation! And their doom may be written,

“ Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!

Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!

These are the words to which the harps of grief
Are strung; and, to the chorus of the damned,
The rocks of hell repeat them, evermore;
Loud echoed through the caverns of despair,
And poured in thunder on the ear of woe.”

Salvation is brought near when the word reaches the conscience. It may be read, or heard, and understood, and yet the conscience be undisturbed. Sin stupefies the conscience; it often sleeps when it should be awake. But there are times when the word enters the conscience; the sinner is convinced of his sins, and the word is fulfilled,—“ I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.”

Psalm l. 21. By whatever means conscience is aroused to do its office, when the sinner feels its reproofs, salvation is then brought near, for then he feels his need of deliverance from sin and wrath. These checks and reproofs admonish of coming punishment; they point to the wrath to come, and show the sinner his need of the Saviour. How often have you felt reproved and condemned by your own conscience! It may have been in the hour of retirement, upon your bed in

the silence of the night, or when you have read the Bible, or stood by the grave of a friend, or when listening to the word of God, or when lying upon a sick bed, or when reading some tract or volume ;—and it may be that even now conscience admonishes you of neglected duty,

“ Points you to the coming wrath ;
And warns you from that wrath to flee ;”—

and then how near is salvation to you ! The word is not only in your mouth, it is in your very soul ; you feel its power there ; it renders you ill at ease in your sins, and points you to the only way of peace and safety. Yes, reader, salvation is near to you. An all-sufficient righteousness is offered for your justification. A divine Redeemer invites you to his bosom ; and your own conscience cries, “ Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain : escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.” Gen. xix. 17.

Salvation is brought near when the word enters the heart and makes some impression there. Not only may the conscience be aroused to do its office, but the judgment may be convinced and the affections moved and excited. Men may be, and they often are, deeply impressed by the truth and Spirit of God. They may feel that they ought at once to close with Christ and become his followers. They may be almost persuaded to become

Christians. Acts xxvi. 28. And have there not been periods in your history when this might have been affirmed of you? Have there not been times when you were seriously impressed, and when you were on the very point of deciding for God; on the very point of surrendering yourself to Jesus Christ, and choosing that good part which shall not be taken away? Luke x. 42. How near was salvation then! You were at the very gate of heaven! A little more, and you would have entered; a little more, and eternal life would have been yours! O, that little more! If you are lost, how bitter will be the reflection, that you went almost to Jesus, but not quite! almost to heaven, but not quite! O reader, your soul, your precious soul, shall it be lost? Lost, when salvation is so near! Lost, with a bleeding Saviour offered to you! Lost, with the blessed Spirit striving with your heart, and when almost persuaded to be a Christian! O close with Christ now, and the place where you are will be to you the house of God not only, but the very gate of heaven! Gen. xxviii. 17. Salvation is near to you now; but by and by it will be as far from you as heaven is from hell. Soon there may be an impassable gulf between you and salvation; and you may look for salvation, but it will be far off from you. Isa. lix. 11. O then accept it now when it is near!

Let me admonish you that the Bible, and the religious book and tract, should be read,

and the gospel heard, with seriousness and prayer. They bring life and immortality to light. They speak of the great salvation. It becomes us to be serious and prayerful when things of so great moment are brought before us. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools." Eccl. v. 1. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. x. 25. The day of death is approaching, and the day of judgment, and how can we be prepared to meet them, while neglecting the worship of God, or hearing the word with indifference, or treating the printed page with neglect? It is a solemn thing to live in the circumstances in which God has placed us. It is, as all admit, a solemn thing to die; but it is no less solemn to live, for we live to die, and our death will be as our life is. This is a state of trial. Means of grace are enjoyed; salvation is provided and brought near; we are surrounded by religious appliances; God has given us precept upon precept, and line upon line. Isa. xxviii. 10; monitory lessons are taught us on every hand; and every step we take is big with character and with destiny. Yet how carelessly we live! We sport on the brink of the grave and of eternity. God speaks, but we refuse to listen; the Saviour calls, but we will not hear; the Spirit strives,

but we will not yield to his influences; salvation is brought near, offered to us, pressed upon us, but we care not for it. We should accept the proffered mercy; we should receive the gift of eternal life; but we do not, we will not. We choose the broad road which leads to death, and perish because we will; for if we reject that which is brought so nigh, it will very soon be far removed from us, and we shall lament our folly when it is too late. "In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly." Jer. xxiii. 20. How much better to think now, and turn to God and live! Why has salvation been provided? Why is it offered? Why brought near and urged upon you, but that you might be saved? O make it your business now to seek salvation! "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Matt. vi. 33.

CHAPTER V.

HOW TO OBTAIN SALVATION.

Acts xvi. 29-32.—Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas ; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord.

WE are sinners ; we need salvation. Jesus has died ; the offer of life is freely made to us through him. Salvation is brought nigh unto us. You have heard and read the word. It has entered into your understanding ; your conscience is aroused ; your heart impressed ; and you are so far persuaded of your duty and your necessities, as to inquire how you may secure the great salvation, or become interested in it. You are inquiring with Job, “ How should man be just with God ? ” Job ix. 2 ; and with the Philippian jailer, “ What must I do to be saved ? ”

This question implies an awakened attention to the subject. It is possible, indeed, for one to inquire about the way of life, and ask what he must do to be saved, merely to gratify his curiosity. But no one will make this inquiry with earnestness, unless he is the subject of an awakened attention. The jailer’s

attention was aroused by a special providence, as well as by the operations of the Spirit. So the Spirit may now use the providence of God, or the truth of God, or both, in arousing the sinner's attention, and causing him to feel an interest in spiritual things, and to be anxious in regard to his own salvation. And if you are inquiring what you must do, it is evident that you are disposed to give to this subject a consideration which hitherto you have not given it. Is this the case with you? Has the truth indeed reached your heart? Is the Spirit operating there? Let not your attention be diverted from the grand inquiry. And not only inquire what you must do, but do it; not only ask for the way of life, but be resolved to walk in it. Many have lost their souls by having their attention diverted from the great question. Satan has taken advantage of their indecision, and borne them away in triumph to the world of woe. And this may be the case with you, notwithstanding your awakened attention, if you do not resolve with fixed purpose, for God and heaven. Your sins, your pleasures, your business, your associates, may plead with you to defer the great work yet for a little season; but stop your ears to their solicitations, and answer all their pleas with the cry, Life, eternal life! How shall I obtain eternal life?

This question implies anxiety. The one who asks what he must do, feels some solicitude about his eternal interests. He fears he

may be lost. He wishes to know how he may escape from hell, how reach heaven. There is a burden on his heart. His guilt oppresses him; his danger alarms. It is no unmeaning question that he asks, for it comes from an anxious soul. His conscience is awake; his fears are excited; his heart impressed. Salvation is nigh; he asks with anxious solicitude, 'How may I obtain salvation?' Is it thus with you? Dismiss not your anxiety, nor rest till you find the Saviour precious to your soul.

This question implies some degree of ignorance. At least this is the case with many who propose it. Some need no information as to what they must do. They have known the Scriptures from their childhood. Their proposing the question only implies their anxiety about their souls. Yet their convictions may be so deep as to cause them almost to despair of salvation; and in such circumstances they may ask for information how they may obtain peace. Others need instruction. They have not been religiously educated. Their views of truth are not clear. And when they ask what they must do, it is because they do not know how to obtain salvation. They are anxious, but in some degree ignorant. They feel that something must be done, but know not what to do. Hence they inquire.

This question implies a desire for information. It was with this view that the jailer

proposed it; and with this view it is proposed by those who have been awakened by the Spirit of God, whose attention is aroused, and whose fears and anxieties are stirred within them. It is thus that it is proposed by you. You put it not as an idle question. It is not a question of mere curiosity, nor of speculation. It is a serious question—one of the most deeply serious questions ever proposed *by* man or *to* man. On the answer to this question hangs your eternal destiny. As it shall be answered *to* you, and as it shall be answered *by* you in your decision and conduct, so shall you be happy or miserable for ever! You ask, What must I do to be saved? I answer in the words of Paul and Silas, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But that I may not only point you *to* the way of life, but *direct you in it*, it may be proper to be more particular. Hence I observe,

1. The first step toward salvation is to feel your need of it. This is clear and plain enough. "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick." Luke v. 31. No one calls in the physician's aid until he feels it to be necessary. A sense of bodily ills drives us to the doctor. So it is with the soul and the great Physician. We cry not for mercy till we feel our need of it; we ask not for salvation till we feel that we are lost. The first step, then, is to feel our need. And that you may thus feel, look at your expo-

sure. Review the particulars enumerated in the first chapter of this book. You are a sinner—far from righteousness—under the curse of God's law—condemned by your own conscience—in danger of hell; you are in the way to perdition, in the broad road to death. How perilous your situation!

“How sad our state by nature is!
Our sin, how deep it stains!”

Consider what has been done to save you. The Son of God has died; his blood has been shed; and the Spirit has been sent down to apply to your soul the purchased redemption. Look at your character—I mean not your reputation in the sight of men, but your moral standing in the sight of God. He can see nothing but corruption in you. You are by nature a child of wrath, because by nature corrupt. Eph. ii. 3. John iii. 6. Your heart is enmity against God; and your life has been a constant series of transgressions of his law. Rom. viii. 7. Your sins have risen like mountains, and are enough to sink you to the lowest hell. Compare yourself with the law of God. Lay your heart and life alongside of each of the ten commandments; or take the sum of the ten in the two great commandments,—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Matt. xxii. 37—39. And how far

have you come from living up to these requisitions ! You have failed, not barely once or twice, but all your life. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Rom. iii. 20. By a faithful application of the law, in all its extent and spirituality, to your own case—to the frame of your own spirit and the tenor of your own conduct—to your own heart and life—you cannot fail to be convinced of your sinfulness and of your need of salvation. Pray also for the illuminating, the convincing and converting influences of the Spirit. He convinces of sin, slays false hopes, and sweeps away false confidences. You shall not have prayed long, with seriousness and earnestness, ere you feel, more deeply than ever, your need of the Saviour. And,

"All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him :
This he gives you—
'T is the Spirit's rising beam."

Even now you feel your need. Already you are convinced of your guilt. You are impressed with a sense of your sin and misery ; you know and feel that without an interest in the great salvation you must perish. Hence you ask what you must do. Not only is salvation brought nigh unto you, but you have taken the first step toward securing it. Your need is felt. But this by no means renders salvation certain. A step toward the way of life is not entering into it. Many

have gone as far, many have gone much farther, and done many things, and yet have lost their souls. You must go farther, or you will never be saved. Hence, I observe,

2. The next step is to see a fitness, a propriety, and an adaptation to our wants, in the gospel way of salvation. First, we feel our need ; next, does the gospel meet our wants ? Is it adapted to our case ? Is there a fitness in this salvation to our necessities as sinners ? This is what the awakened, anxious sinner is to see. And can he not see it ? Is it not as clear as a sunbeam ? God by it is honoured. His holiness, justice, and truth are vindicated, and new lustre is given to all his perfections. And if his own glory is the end of his works, surely that end is attained by the scheme of redemption. There is in the gospel a fitness to this end or design. And this salvation too abases man. It assigns him his proper place in the dust ; and if humility, and self-abasement, and prayer, and trust in God, are becoming graces and exercises in man, then there is in the gospel salvation, an adaptation to this end, for it most effectually promotes them. It also provides for us a Saviour, who is just what we want, and all we want. There is in him an infinite fulness. He possesses unsearchable riches. Eph. iii. 8. He is a prophet to instruct our ignorance and illuminate our darkness ; he is a priest to satisfy for our sins, and intercede for our souls ; he is a king to subdue our enemies

and rule us with his gentle sway. As God he has all power ; as man he can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Heb. iv. 15. There is no want in our natures, nor in our circumstances, which is not met by his all-sufficiency. "He is the chiefest among ten thousand ; he is altogether lovely." Sol. Song, v. 10. 16. "His name is as ointment poured forth ; all his garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." Sol. Song i. 3. Ps. xlv. 8. Yet the unwakened sinner can see in him no beauty that he should desire him. Isa. liii. 2. To the indifferent and careless, as well as to the self-righteous, he is as a root out of a dry ground ; they can see nothing in him, nor in his salvation, which meets their wants. To them he hath no form nor comeliness. Isa. liii. 2, 3. But when one is awokened, and feels himself perishing, he begins to see in Jesus Christ, the Saviour he needs. He begins to see in the gospel scheme a fitness and propriety which he never saw before, and to behold in its provisions a wonderful adaptation to all his necessities. But many have seen and felt all this, and yet not closed with Christ. They have seen and felt all this, and yet remained unrenewed and unforgiven, and perished. Two steps toward the cross are not enough ; the sinner must go quite there, or die in his sins.

3. The next step is to seek the renewal of your heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. Not one right step can be taken without the

Spirit's aid ; we need his influences from the first ; and the reason why so many awakened sinners lose their convictions and again become careless, and why so many who once seemed to be converted, return again to the world, is because they were never born of the Spirit. And wherever conviction stops short of regeneration, there the sinner will stop short of Christ, and never enter the way of life. You see the danger then of resisting convictions and grieving the Spirit. Such a course, if successful, must of necessity end in perdition. Men must be born again, or they cannot be saved. John iii. 1—10. Hence they should cherish the Spirit's strivings and seek his influences in earnest prayer. It was said of Saul of Tarsus, when awakened on his way to Damascus, "Behold, he prayeth." Acts ix. 11. Prayer should be the sinner's resort when convinced of sin, and indeed at all times. He should cry with the publican, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," Luke xviii. 13 ; with David, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness : according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. li. 1, 2. 10. And with the prodigal he should say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee," Luke xv. 18—21 ; and with blind Bartimeus, "Jesus, thou Son

of David, have mercy on me." Mark x. 46, 47. Nor should he be satisfied without a thorough work of grace upon his heart. He should not rest till he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. v. 17. But many pray, who do not surrender themselves to Jesus Christ. This step does not save the soul; for prayer is not faith.—Hence,

4. The next step is the entire renunciation of ourselves, of all our refuges and false confidences. It is too often that many of these are between the sinner and the cross. He will stand upon his moral life, his works of merit, his charities, his prayers and tears. So long as these are in the way, so long as he rests in them or relies upon them, so long is he unprepared to receive and rest upon the Saviour of sinners and take refuge in his atoning sacrifice. Every thing of this kind must be renounced. You, reader, you must be brought to feel that

"None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

The language of Jehovah is, "Thou hast destroyed thyself," Hos. xiii. 9; and the sinner must be brought to feel that he is self-destroyed and helpless, ere he is prepared to embrace the great salvation. And this he will feel if his heart is renewed by the Spirit of God; and when he is brought to this point, he is ready to take that step by which he

enters the way of life and is clothed with the garments of salvation.

5. That step is the reception of Jesus Christ by faith. Faith receives the testimony of God. It believes what God has said of his Son. Saving faith is reliance upon Jesus Christ for salvation. It is trust in Christ; and has been thus defined,— “Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.” He is offered to us in the gospel as our Saviour. First, we must feel our need of him; second, we must see in him a fitness to our case; and then, renouncing ourselves and every other refuge, we must receive and rest upon him for salvation. This is the way of life; and this is the way to enter it. There is no salvation if we stop short of this. We must have faith, or we cannot be justified; we must receive Jesus, and rest upon him, or we shall be lost; for without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. 6. Do you feel yourself a sinner? Do you inquire what you must do? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Saviour you need. Trust in him; rely upon him with humble and obedient confidence. “He is the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by him.” John xiv. 6. Receive him in all his offices, as your prophet, priest, and king,—as your Redeemer and your all,—that he of God

may be made unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.
1 Cor. i. 30.

Review now the steps which have been enumerated. Salvation is provided; it is offered; it is brought near to you; and you inquire how you may secure it. The question implies an awakened attention to the subject; it implies anxiety about the soul. And the answer is,—feel your need of it, see a fitness in it, seek the renovation of your heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, renounce yourself, receive and rely upon Jesus Christ. This is to believe in him; this is the way of life; these steps lead to heaven. You must take them all, if you would gain the skies. Many have gone as far as the fourth; but not taking the fifth, they have remained in their sins. They have gone to the very gate of heaven, only to sink the deeper in hell; they have gone almost to the cross, only to be ground to powder beneath that stone which is laid for a foundation in Zion. Isa. xxviii. 16; Matt. xxi. 42—44. O reader, stop not till you have entered the way of life. Rest not till your soul is safe. Go not almost to the cross; go quite there. Not only behold and admire the Lamb of God, but embrace him by faith. Acts xiii. 41. And now while you feel your need of salvation, and see a fitness in it to your wants, close in with its offers, and secure to yourself an interest in its priceless blessings. While you

confess your sins to God, and call on the Spirit to renew your heart, believe in Christ to the saving of your soul. Psa. li. 10, 11; Heb. x. 38, 39.

Five steps have been described as leading the soul into the way of life. These might all be included in one, viz. *coming to Christ*; for he says, “Come unto me; and, him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” Matt. xi. 28. John vi. 37. But no one ever came to Jesus without feeling his need of him, and seeing a fitness in him, and crying for mercy, and renouncing himself; and hence the view which has been given is correct and Scriptural. It authorizes no one to delay coming to Christ for a single moment; for to come to him is to take the very steps described; and to begin to take these steps, is to begin to come to the Saviour, and this should be done now. There is nothing to justify a moment’s delay.

“Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream.”

Say to every temptation and to every difficulty and discouragement, “Hinder me not.” Gen. xxiv. 56. Cry unto God, “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; draw me, and I will run after thee.” Jer. xxxi. 18. Sol. Song i. 4. Turn the eye of your mind to Jesus, saying,

“Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.”

When these steps shall have been taken—whether in the precise order enumerated, it matters not—you will begin to walk in newness of life. Rom. vi. 4. Evangelical repentance is inseparable from saving faith. No one ever repented without the exercise of faith in Christ; and no one ever yet believed in Christ unto salvation, without exercising repentance for sin. “Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.” To be saved, you must repent. Sin must be sorrowed for and forsaken. It must be confessed to God and deplored. You should mourn over the corruptions of your heart and life, the depravity of your nature and the vileness of your practice. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” 2 Cor. vii. 10. And the evidence of our repentance, and the fruits of our faith, must be seen in our lives. Our conduct must witness to the sincerity and reality of our religion. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Heb. xii. 14. Every man that hath hope in Christ, “purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John iii. 3. He begins the performance of religious duties; and having a principle of grace implanted in his heart, he continues firm and faithful, “growing in grace, and in the knowledge of

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter iii. 18. In his life is seen a practical exemplification of Peter's exhortation, "and besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. i. 5-8.

From what precedes it appears that the way of salvation is plain and easily understood. There is nothing dark nor obscure about it. A child can understand it. And if you perish, it will not be because you do not know the way of life. You have known it from childhood. It has been pointed out to you every Sabbath day. A voice has followed you from infancy upward, saying, "This is the way, walk thou in it." Isa. xxx. 21. Your pathway through life has been set with guide-boards at every turn, pointing out to you the way to heaven. In helpless infancy you were lulled to sleep in your mother's arms with the song of redemption; in your youth redeeming love was the theme that most frequently greeted your wayward ears; and now salvation is the sound which reverberates through all the avenues of your soul; and when you die it will be in full view of the cross of Christ. The steps which lead to that only

source of peace, of hope and joy, are clearly pointed out and are fully known. You have been told, and you know, just where to place your feet to bridge the gulf which lies between you and heaven. Place them there, and you are safe ; place them any where else, and you tread on sand, and sink in the fathomless abyss beyond the reach of recovery !

The way of salvation is also easy, as well as plain. What can be easier ?

“ His help he 'll freely give,
He makes no hard condition,
'T is only—Look, and live.”

You ask what you must do. The answer is, Believe. “ This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” John vi. 29. Of devising a better way of salvation, you would not for a moment think. I ask whether you could devise one that is easier ? I know indeed, it is difficult to sinful men. “ Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” Jer. xiii. 23. The way is difficult to sinners because they are proud and wicked. It is hard for them to renounce themselves ; hard to submit to the righteousness of another ; hard to cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Isa. i. 16, 17. Hence the gate is said to be strait and the way narrow. Matt. vii. 13, 14. But all these difficulties result from their own sinfulness. In itself considered, the way is easy ; and it

leaves the sinner excuseless, because he cannot make his sinfulness an excuse for the neglect of salvation—he cannot make his sins his justification before God. God has done all he consistently can—all that he ever will do—to make the way plain and easy, and hence they who perish are without excuse. This they must ever feel. This you will feel, reader, if you are lost! O then close with Christ; believe in him and be saved. You feel your need of him now; you see a fitness in him; renounce yourself, flee to his open arms, surrender to him your heart, and devote to him the remnant of your days. Let your language be,

“Here, Lord, I give myself away
‘Tis all that I can do.”

“Seize the kind promise while it waits,
And march to Zion’s heavenly gates;
Believe—and take the promised rest;
Obey—and be for ever blest.”

CHAPTER VI.

EXCUSES.

1 KINGS xviii. 21.—How long halt ye between two opinions ?

ISAIAH i. 18.—Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

THE Scriptures give us a most delightful view of the Supreme Being. They represent him as providing salvation, offering it to us, and when we refuse to accept it, condescending to reason the matter with us. When we hesitate, he says, “How long halt ye ?” and when we would excuse ourselves, and cavil or object, he says, “Come now, and let us reason together.”

In the progress of this work, you have seen your exposure on account of sin ; what has been done to save you ; the nature of the salvation provided, and its free offer. You have been led, it may be, to feel your need of it, and to ask what you must do to be saved. The way of life has been pointed out to you ; you have been told how to enter it ; and you are now debating with yourself whether you shall enter into it. You are halting between

two opinions; and Jehovah says to you, "Come now, and let us reason together."

But why do you hesitate? Why halt between two opinions? Is it not an easy question to decide? You cannot hesitate because you have any doubts of what is duty; for you know you ought at once to close with Christ and seek the salvation of your soul. You cannot hesitate because you know not what is your interest; for your own best good requires you without delay to turn unto the Lord. And there is surely difference enough between heaven and hell, salvation and perdition, eternal life and eternal death, to render a moment's hesitation alike unnecessary and inexcusable.

You are a poor, miserable, condemned sinner. Jesus has died that you might live. You are directed to the way of salvation; you have taken some steps toward it; you stand at its very entrance; and the question which agitates your mind, and which you are about to decide, is, Shall I enter? Shall I close with Christ? Shall I believe and be saved? O think of your situation! Awakened, alarmed, yet pausing at heaven's gate, and debating with yourself whether you shall secure the salvation of your soul—whether you will "make your calling and election sure!" 2 Pet. i. 10. Why hesitate?

Do you think God is so merciful that he will not punish you, even if you do not embrace Christ? True, God is merciful. He

is good, he is benevolent, he is long-suffering, he is very pitiful and of tender mercy. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Jas. v. 11. On all these points the Scriptures are full and explicit. They declare that Jehovah is the Lord God, merciful and gracious; and that his mercy endures for ever. Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. Ps. cxviii. 1—4. But they are equally explicit in teaching that he is just. And justice is not inconsistent with mercy. A being perfect in all his attributes, must punish the guilty as well as reward the innocent. To treat the innocent and the guilty alike, would be to confound the distinction between right and wrong, and destroy all the motives to virtue. It is true the righteous are not innocent, they belong to a fallen race; but they are treated as innocent for the sake of Him who in their stead answered the demands of justice, being united to him by faith. Christ himself was innocent. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Pet. ii. 22. He suffered for the guilty. Our sins were laid on him; he bore their punishment. Isa. liii. 6. And this was consistent with justice, because he was voluntary in assuming our place. He laid down his life for us, as he himself declares—"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." John x. 17, 18. Yet he was delivered up by the Father, who "made him who knew no sin to be sin for us." Rom. viii. 32. 2 Cor. v. 21. And if God spared not his own Son, think you that he will spare the sinner

who rejects him? Do you doubt whether God is just? View the agony of Jesus in the garden, and his sufferings on the cross. There, in characters which angels and men may read, it is written, God is just! Do you doubt whether God will punish sinners? Hear the dying Saviour himself exclaim—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46. That which the Saviour then suffered from the hidings of his Father's face, was no doubt somewhat of the nature of what the damned suffer in hell; and there on the cross, in that hour of the power of darkness, when the Son of God expired, it was written, not only in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, but in all the languages of the earth, and the universe may read it, God will punish sinners! He will by no means clear the guilty. Ex. xxxiv. 7. Do you doubt whether God will punish you if you reject his Son? Reader, it is written, "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." 1 John v. 12. Sooner might Judas escape than you, if you believe not in Jesus. Judas went to his own place, and you must go there too, if you enter not into the way of life. Acts i. 25. God is merciful; but the only way in which he can show mercy to you, is through Jesus Christ, by whom his justice has been satisfied. Believe in Jesus, and you shall live, "through God's abounding grace;" reject Jesus and in your own person you must bear the wrath of God for ever, and

be for ever satisfying, by your own sufferings, the justice of God. Nor can his justice be thus fully satisfied while eternity endures. It will ever be crying out for vengeance on you for the rejection of the Son of God, when he was freely offered to you.

“Repent, the voice celestial cries,
Nor longer dare delay :
The wretch that scorns the mandate dies,
And meets a fiery day.

Bow, ere the awful trumpet sound,
And call you to his bar :
For mercy knows the appointed bound,
And turns to vengeance there.”

“But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ?” Mal. iii. 2. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.” Heb. xii. 25.

Do you hesitate because you have some faint hope that God will save all men, whether they believe in Christ or not ? After what has been said, I need not tarry long in answering this excuse. If God will certainly save all men, then what exposure is there from which you need to be saved ? If all are to be saved, then where is the need of anxiety about your soul ? It is certainly very strange that the thousands on the day of Pen-

tecost cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" if the Apostles preached the doctrine of universal salvation! Acts ii. 37. It is certainly very strange that the Scriptures should insist so much upon the necessity of faith and repentance, and give such clear and vivid representations of future punishment, and of the eternity of that punishment, if all are to be saved at all events! Have all the sinners who have died in their sins gone to heaven—the thieves, the murderers, the adulterers? Rev. xxii. 15. Were the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah swept to heaven in a shower of fire and brimstone; and the old world carried thither by the flood which destroyed them? Did Judas go direct to heaven when, after betraying his Master, he went and hanged himself, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out? Has he not gone to his own place—to hell? Matt. xxvii. 5. Acts i. 18, 25. And if but one has perished, then Universalism is untrue; and may not all perish who die without faith in Christ? Such are the teachings of Scripture; for "he that believeth not shall be damned; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 36. Of all the delusions of the devil with which corrupt man ever suffered himself to be deceived, none is more contrary to the express declarations and the whole tenor of the word of God, none is more unscriptural,

nor more absurd, than this same doctrine of universal salvation ! It is a damnable error, a doctrine of the devil : its author is the father of lies. Gen. iii. 4. John viii. 44. 1 Tim. iv. 1. It dishonours God's character ; represents sin as a trifle ; and encourages transgression. It cuts off every motive to virtue, to amendment and reformation. If, dear reader, you are really convinced of sin by the Spirit of God, you cannot, for such a reason, hesitate long about entering the path to heaven. If you see your sins in their true light, as violations of God's law, which is holy, just, and good, (Rom. vii. 12,) you must see that they deserve his wrath and curse for ever, and that you, on account of them, deserve his everlasting displeasure. Sin is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinite God, and it deserves an infinite punishment. True conviction implies correct views of sin ; and correct views of sin are inconsistent with the belief that all men shall be saved ; for all men have not faith, and without faith no one can be saved. Many die without faith ; and they who thus die are lost. This will be your doom, if you enter not into the way of life ! For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.—

2 Thess. iii. 2. Heb. xi. 6. Mark xvi. 16.
John viii. 21. 2 Thess. i. 7—10.

Do you hesitate about closing with Christ because you have yet some hope of being saved by your works? But if this be the way to heaven, then why did Jesus die? Why do we need a Saviour, if our works can save us? And if salvation be of works, then where is grace? It is excluded. Christ died in vain, if salvation be of works; and then, too, there is no grace in our salvation. But "by grace are ye saved," saith Paul. Eph. ii. 8. "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Hence the same apostle declares that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Gal. ii. 16. And it is written, "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified." Rom. iii. 20. Such being the plain declarations of Scripture, how can you hesitate to close with Christ, in the vain hope that your works will save you? Such a hope is a spider's web. It will leave your soul defenceless in the day of God's anger.

Or are you trying to make yourself better before you go to Jesus? Remember,

If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all:
Not the righteous----
Sinners Jesus came to call."

A sick man, ready to expire, trying to make himself better before applying to the physician! A venomous disease is preying upon you; there is but one Physician who can heal you; and to him you will not apply! You must first hazard the dangerous experiment of trying to cure yourself; or you must at least try to make yourself a little better before you apply to the great Physician! O, you are upon a perilous experiment! Make yourself better you never can. Your case is growing worse; your sins are increasing; you are grieving the Spirit and slighting the Saviour who died for you! Could you make yourself better, you might save yourself. Then why did the Saviour die? Why was a Saviour provided? He came to save sinners; and to save them from their sins. In all your sins, and with them all pressing upon you, go to him, and cry, Lord, save me, I perish; Jesus, save me, or I die! Matt. viii. 25.

Or do you feel yourself so great a sinner that you cannot be forgiven? Have you tried every expedient in the hope of finding relief, and are you now ready to despair? One expedient you have not tried! That is faith in Jesus; and that is the only way of peace. And do you hesitate to apply to him because your sins are so many and so great? Why the very design for which he came into the world was to save just such sinners as you! Do your sins

“surpass

The power and glory of his grace?”

Do they exceed his boundless merits, his unsearchable riches, his infinite sacrifice, his everlasting righteousness? He is an all-sufficient Saviour. “All power is his in heaven and in earth.” Matt. xxviii. 18. “He is able to save unto the uttermost.” Heb. vii. 25. “His blood cleanseth from all sin.” 1 John i. 7. He invites all to come unto him, and promises them rest. Matt. xi. 28—30. He invites you; and were your sins ten thousand times as great as they are, the fountain which Christ hath opened for sin and for uncleanness, is sufficient to wash them all away. Zech. xiii. 1. “Yea, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Isa. i. 18. How many poor miserable sinners have found salvation in Christ! And if you will but embrace him by faith, you too shall rejoice in his forgiving love. O, then no longer halt between two opinions; no longer hesitate and delay; but now behold the Lamb of God with the eye of faith—look—believe—and live!

“No longer now delay,
Nor vain excuses frame;
Christ bids you come to-day,
Though poor, and blind, and lame:
All things are ready----sinner, come!
For every trembling soul there’s room.”

CHAPTER VII.

MOTIVES.

LUKE xv. 17—20.—And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

AND yet, dear reader, you stand halting between life and death, heaven and hell. The reasons which cause you to hesitate have been examined. They are found of no avail. You are without excuse; and yet you enter not by the door into the sheepfold. John x. 1. You act not only without reason, but against it. A rational being acting irrationally! Would God that, like the prodigal, you might come to yourself! Then would you return to your Father's house; then would you believe in Jesus and enter the way of life. And would you be governed by reason, by conscience, by Scripture, by the Spirit of God, there are motives which should prevail with you to receive Jesus as your Saviour, and

trust in the merit of his blood. Before I close this little volume, and take my final leave of you, let me faithfully urge some of these motives upon your serious and prayerful attention.

God has claims upon you, and you cannot resist his claims without sin. He is your Maker; and as a creature of his power, you ought to love and obey him. You have broken his law, and he commands you to repent. Acts xvii. 30. He says to you, "My son, give me thy heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." Prov. xxiii. 26. He requires you to believe in his Son. John vi. 29. And it is reasonable and right; it is your duty, and it should be done, and done now! While you neglect it, you are disobeying God, and dis honouring him. Yea, you are setting at nought his claims, treating his word as if it were untrue, and making God a liar, because you believe not the record that God gave of his Son. 1 John v. 10, 11.

While you are halting, you are abusing the goodness of God which provided this great salvation. The plan of redemption originated in his infinite love. Every line is resplendent with the rays of his benevolence. "His goodness here in full glory shines." If in the cross of Christ the justice of God is conspicuous, no less conspicuous there is his goodness. There is goodness in providing salvation; in making the offer; in sending the Spirit; in convincing of sin: every thing around you

speaks of God's goodness ; and this goodness you abuse while you hesitate about entering the way of life.

“ Is this the kind return,
And these the thanks we owe ?
Thus to abuse eternal love,
Whence all our blessings flow !

To what a stubborn frame
Has sin reduced our mind !
What strange rebellious wretches we,
And God as strangely kind !”

O, let the goodness of God lead you to repentance ! Rom. ii. 4. Let it bow your will, and constrain you to yield to the cross of Christ.

While you are hesitating, you are slighting the compassion of the Saviour. His compassion is divine. It was this that moved him to undertake our case ; and this animated him while here on earth, constrained him to become obedient unto death, and it now fills his bosom as he invites the perishing to come unto him. He pitied us even unto death ; he pities us now in his glory. He pities the poor hardened wretch who rejects him ; he pities the awakened soul, who mourns over his sins, and yet hesitates to embrace him. Can you slight his compassions ? Can you doubt his willingness to save ? O, it is cruel thus to question his love, when he has proved it in his bloody agony and his dying groans !

While you are hesitating, you are resisting and grieving the Spirit of God. It is by his influences that you have been brought to your present state of anxiety. He has awakened your attention, applied the truth to your heart, convinced you of sin, and led you to inquire what you must do. While God is waiting to be gracious, Isa. xxx. 18, his Spirit is wooing you to Christ; and while you delay and hesitate, you resist and grieve the Spirit. This is perilous to your soul. The Spirit is a sovereign, operating when and where he listeth. John iii. 8. He will not always strive. Gen. vi. 3. Yet it is by his influences that your heart must be renewed and you be drawn to Christ. If he depart, you are lost. While you feel his power, yield to him, and embrace the hope set before you. Heb. vi. 17-20. This is your only hope. There is no other way of deliverance from sin and misery. While you delay, your sins and your danger are increasing, and the probability of your salvation is hourly diminishing! Salvation is now near; behold the Lamb of God! John i. 29. Righteousness is near; embrace it, and be delivered from condemnation! Rom. viii. 1. How precious the blessings and privileges offered you—peace and joy in this world—a death of triumph—a heaven of glory! O listen to Jehovah when he promises to make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Isa. lv. 3. He calls; hear his voice, yield to his Spirit, believe in

his Son. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Ps. ii. 12. The word of God now is, "Turn you at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." But soon he will say, "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Prov. i. 23—31.

I shall offer but one other motive for an immediate decision of the all important question. It is this—Your present situation is full of interest and of peril; and upon the decision you now make may depend your everlasting destiny! The Spirit is at work with your heart; the Saviour is inviting you to his arms; the Father is waiting to receive you graciously and love you freely. Hosea xiv. 2, 4. The angels of God are waiting to

rejoice over you, Luke xv. 10; devils are ready to triumph in your ruin; and you are almost persuaded to be a Christian, yet hesitating, halting, wavering; sometimes on the point of yielding your heart to Jesus and resting in him as your Saviour; and then again half inclined to banish the whole matter from your mind—for the present! How interesting this moment with you! how critical! how perilous! It is the turning point in your destiny! If you close with Christ, you are saved! If you refuse, you are lost! The Spirit will depart; your heart become harder than ever; and your last state will be worse than the first! Matt. xii. 43-45. Then will there remain to you only a “certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation!” Heb. x. 26, 27. O that I could say that word which the Spirit would bless to your salvation! that word which, with God’s blessing, would decide the doubtful case, and cause you to choose the good part! But you must decide for yourself, as for yourself you must pass the river of death, and stand before the judgment seat! I can only point you to the Saviour—I can only direct you *to* the way of life. Would that I could lead you *in* it! But you must enter it *for yourself*, or die! To enter it you must believe; and believing, you shall be saved. “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things.” Acts xiii. 38, 39.

Come, humble sinner, in whose breast,
A thousand thoughts revolve ;
Come, with your guilt and fear oppressed,
And make this last resolve :

‘ I ’ll go to Jesus, though my sin
High as a mountain rose ;
I know his courts, I ’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

Prostrate I ’ll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess ;
I ’ll tell him I ’m a wretch undone
Without his sovereign grace.

Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer ;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try ;
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.’

T H E E N D.













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